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The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 3 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of July 2001 and on behalf of the members of the League of Arab States, I have the honour to inform you that on Tuesday, 3 July 2001, the Arab Group held a meeting in New York at the level of ambassadors and permanent representatives to the United Nations. They met in implementation of the resolutions of the 2001 Arab Summit Conference held in Amman, Jordan, and the 2000 Arab Summit Conference held in Cairo, Egypt, on pan-Arab solidarity with Lebanon in the face of Israeli attacks and threats and in the light of the act of aggression committed by Israeli air forces on the afternoon on Sunday, 1 July 2001, against Lebanon, when they attacked a radar position of the Syrian Arab forces operating in Lebanon in the Duhur al-Aytrun locality of the Bekaa, wounding two members of the Syrian forces and an enlisted man in the Lebanese Army.

In the delicate situation in which the Middle East region finds itself, I should like to state, on behalf of the Arab Group, that the Arab position of solidarity is based on the following invariable elements:

The Arab Group condemns the repeated Israeli attacks on Lebanon, constituting as they do a flagrant violation of the country's sovereignty and of its territorial integrity and airspace. Israel alone bears responsibility for the grave consequences they have and for the fact that they jeopardize international peace and security. It further condemns outright the Israeli aggression against the Syrian Arab forces operating in Lebanon.

The Arab Group affirms its support for Lebanon in asserting all of its rights and in taking all legitimate measures to liberate the occupied Shab'a farmlands and secure the return of the prisoners that Israel abducted from their homes in open defiance of international legality and international humanitarian law.

This attack is a manifest attempt to divert attention from the infamous Israeli practices and outrages against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

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The Arab Group voices its concern at the ongoing series of Israeli threats against and attacks on the unity and integrity of Lebanese territory, and it declares its full solidarity with Lebanon and Syria in their coordinated action to counter this aggression and all the Israeli designs against the two countries.

The Arab Group urges the United Nations Secretariat to take the measures necessary to halt Israeli aggression against Lebanese territory and against the Syrian Arab forces operating there, to prevent any recurrence of such aggression and to require Israel to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and implement the resolutions that embody international legitimacy.

The Arab Group would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the continuing commitment of the Arab States to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace, the Madrid terms of reference and the other relevant resolutions that represent international legitimacy and to reiterate their deep belief that it is such a peace that will provide the region with a climate of security and stability.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 40.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations
Chairman of the Arab Group